TERM LIMITS AND STATE LEGISLATURES'

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Introduction

Term limits are a relatively new occurrence in the United States, and although there have been numerous studies conducted on how term limit legislation affects legislatures, legislative behavior, and the career path of legislators; there has been very little work completed to analyze the effect of term limits on state legislatures' approval ratings. This is a significant oversight in that representative democracy rests in some notion that lawmakers and lawmaking ought to reflect the desires (or interests) of the voters. If voters create term limits but are also dissatisfied with the performance of their legislative bodies, then some breakdown has occurred in the decision making process. The research presented in this paper will review the history of term limit legislation, viewpoints of term limit advocates, existing scholarly studies and their conclusions in regards to term limit legislation. This scholarship will be employed to identify the important control variables selected for this analysis. Finally, the paper presents original findings for the effect of term limits upon states' approval ratings of their State legislatures utilizing a multivariate linear regression model.

In 1990 three states enacted legislation placing term limits on their state legislators, and since that time term limit legislation has been passed in 18 additional states. Six of these twenty-one states that enacted term limit legislation have seen it repealed; leaving fifteen states with active term limit legislation. The State Supreme Courts repealed the legislation in four states and the other two had it repealed in their state legislatures.

Career politicians in state legislatures are a relatively new phenomenon in the United States. Moncrief, Niemi, and Powell's (2004) analysis of term limits and legislative turnover rates illustrates that until the 1950's the crisis in state legislatures was not career politicians, it was exactly the opposite; a lack of continuity due to new members in each legislature creating an atmosphere characterized by a lack of professionalism and a general weakness in the decision making process. A study conducted by Charles Hyneman (1938) found that some state legislatures had more than fifty percent new members in each session. The professionalization of state legislatures during the twentieth century led to a decline in the voluntary retirement of legislators. This decline coupled with the incumbency advantage experienced at the polls has produced longer serving state legislators. By the late 1980's many citizens had become largely dissatisfied with long serving legislators who they felt were no longer representative of the population, unresponsive to public interests, and becoming more associated with special interests and elites. For many, including the Republican Party, the response to this dilemma was term limits. The term limit movement in the late 1980's and 1990's was in large part a strategy by the Republican minority to unseat entrenched Democrats. Term limits became one of the tenets of the "Contract with America" which the Republicans endorsed in 1994, and much of the funding came from tax-exempt organizations subsidized by the Republican Party (Powell 2008). Democrats controlled 59% of the seats in the U.S. House and 56% of the seats in the U.S. Senate in 1992, and had controlled both U.S. Legislative branches for 47 of the last 53 years. The Democrats also held 59% of all state legislative seats and controlled 68% of all legislative assemblies. The Republican Party was the clear minority party in 1992, while receiving 50% of the popular vote, and they recognized term limits as a way to unseat longtime incumbent Democrats (Campbell 1996).

Robert Kurfirst's (1996) analysis of term limit supporters illustrates major differences in advocates' views of incumbency, professionalism, and the role of a legislator's relationship with his/her constituents. Term limit advocates see term limits as a "cure-all" for all that is wrong with state legislatures. But do they really make legislatures more like what their constituents want them to be? Are people in term limit states more satisfied with their legislatures? Robert Kurfirst (1996) explains differences in supporters' views by categorizing believers into four categories; progressives, populists, republicans, and libertarians.

Term limit progressivism has its roots in the Progressive Movement of the early 1900's. The Progressive Movement sought to initiate "good government" practices with the implementation of the recall, referendum, and citizen initiative. Term limits were not part of the original Progressive Movement because legislators did not serve long terms, and because it was believed that the shorter terms of politicians were directly associated with the corruption of the urban machines and unskilled state legislatures. Therefore the Progressive Movement sought not to limit "time of service," but actually to increase it. They felt that a more professional legislature would eliminate much of the corruption that existed in the political relationships of the time. Term limit progressives acknowledge that the professionalization of legislatures has back fired. They believe that legislators today are more concerned with elites and special interests in the hopes of re-election than the interests of their constituents.

Term limit populism also aspires for more responsive and efficient legislatures. The Populist faction views professionalism and careerism as obstacles to good government, and thus seeks to install more "ordinary citizens" into the legislature.

Populists believe that only with the influx of new amateur legislators can we recapture a degenerated government that has become too concerned with re-election and the welfare of special interests and elites. Kurfirst (1996) likens these term limit supporters to the Anti-Federalists of the late 1700's. Today's populist movement generally prefers more stringent term limits than the ones currently imposed, usually to a single term.

Term limit republicanism rejects the ideas of the progressive and the populist claiming that term limits are necessary not to increase citizen-legislator relationships, but to distance legislators from constituents. Republicanism maintains that term limits will eliminate careerism, thus enabling legislators to better negotiate policy that is for the good of the general community. A central contention of republicanism is that in order for legislators to enact good policy they must be free from the pressure of re-election. Term-Limit Republicans consider term limits essential in the transformation of legislators into "trustees" insulated from public demands, elites, and special interests.

Term limit libertarians consider term limits an indispensable part of a larger strategy to reduce the size of government. Libertarians believe that term limits are but one step in the reduction of staffs, budgets, and expenditures. They are in favor of shortening legislative sessions, lowering legislator salaries, and reducing legislator benefits. Term limit libertarians regard term limits as necessary to eliminate the "culture of spending" they perceive as leading to the demise of the nation. I believe that Kurfirst would closely associate term limit libertarians with today's Tea Party Movement.

Although each separate faction supporting term limit reform has its distinct differences, they all share one common belief; limitations on length of service will reduce elitism and the over-representation of special interests. Progressivism, populism, and liberalism share the view that term limits will reduce careerism and thus reduce professionalism. While government reformers argued for the professionalization of legislatures, this, ironically appears to be negatively associated with approval ratings (Kelleher and Wolak, 2007; and Squire, 1993).

Term limits and state legislatures

Political scientists and government reformers have mostly been proponents of professional legislatures and are opponents of term limits. Political scientists are concerned that the average citizen does not possess the ability to hold public office and term limits will deplete capable leadership that is already in short supply (Petracca 1992). Many scholars have investigated the effects of term limits on various aspects of state legislatures; their work, their membership, and their effectiveness.

Much scholarly work has been carried out to analyze the effects of state legislative term limits on legislator turnover. Francis and Kenny (1997) projected that legislative term limits would produce 35-50% turnover rates in State legislatures; loading the assemblies with inexperience and discontinuity. Moncrief, Niemi, and Powell (2004) provide empirical data to confirm that term limited states are seeing a larger increase in turnover than non-term limited states, but not to the degree earlier predicted. Building on the pioneering work of Schlesinger (1966), Black (1972), and Kiewiet and Zeng (1993) many scholars (Farmer and Powell, 2003; Heberlig and Leland, 2004; Caress, 1996; Powell, 2000; Steen, 2006; and Maddox 2003) are now analyzing the career choices of term limited politicians and what Francis and Kenny (2000) term the churning effect. Contrary to the expectations of the progressive, populist, and libertarian advocates for term limits seeking a less professional legislature Farmer and Powell (2003) find in their study of Maine and Ohio that 45% of politicians who have been termed out of office have simply moved into other political offices. They note that this development should be troubling to term limit advocates “As experienced politicians circulate through political office, there may actually be less opportunity for citizens without prior elective experience to win office. Instead of heralding the end of long-term political careers, we may instead simply be witnessing the emergence of new kinds of careers." Nine States' term limit legislation bans "consecutive terms" which enables politicians to rotate through different offices while still seeking a political career. The six States that impose lifetime bans see the "churning effect" but not to the extent of the other term limited States.

Another argument proposed by term limit advocates was that term limits would increase voter turnout. Kimberly Nalder (2007) building on the work previously cited analyzed California, district level voting data from 1974 to 2004 and found no support for this claim. Nalder's findings illustrate that open seat races at the state level in California have risen since 1994 and continue to remain at a high level, but California's U.S. Congressional open seated elections which also rose in 1994 have returned to their previous levels. It was believed that these open seated elections would increase competition and thus increase voter turnout (Basham, 2001; Basham and Polhill, 2005; and Francis and Kenney, 1997). It was also believed that the influx of new candidates would indirectly restore confidence in the government thereby increasing voter turnout. Nalder concluded that the results or her pooled-time series regression analysis could produce no evidence that the open seated races in California created an increase in voter turnout. And though she did not attempt to correlate any relationship of government trust with term limits she did conclude that if term limits did indirectly increase political trust, that trust did not increase voter turnout.

Weissert and Halperin (2007) use logistic regression to analyze survey results from fifty nine party chairs and 1,060 lobbyists in Florida. Their analysis focuses on party chairs and lobbyists because they observe the effects of term limits on state institutions first hand. The results of their study found that the more knowledgeable and attentive chairs and lobbyists were the more likely they were to oppose term limits or support their repeal. Their analysis found that chairs and lobbyists were not opposed to term limits because of "self interest" but out of concern for the institution and the harm term limits could cause. Term limit advocates would dispute this claim, and as a result use the fact that because chairs and lobbyists are opposed to term limits they must be correct.

In opposition to the findings of Weissert and Haplperin (2007), Kelleher and Wolak (2007) present data that shows term limits to be a statistically significant factor in citizen's confidence levels of representatives in the State legislatures, but the variable is omitted when analyzing confidence in the institutional processes of the State legislature. The research conducted for this paper concentrates on the effect of term limits on the institution of State legislatures not legislators. Kelleher and Wolak's (2007) data illustrate that 17% of people surveyed have a great deal of confidence in state legislatures, 57% have some confidence, 18% only have a little confidence, and 8% have no confidence at all. It is unclear the specific difference between approval ratings and confidence levels, but the analysis of the 1,867 individuals surveyed in the data set used by Kelleher and Wolak (2007) was the foundation for the hypotheses presented in this paper.

Approval ratings and the economy

Economic conditions are among the "usual suspects" when it comes to explaining just about everything in state politics. For example, there have been numerous studies completed documenting the importance of economic conditions as they relate to voting behavior in presidential, congressional, and gubernatorial elections but very little research completed analyzing economic conditions data and voting behavior at the State level, and even less research evaluating the affects the condition of the State economy may have on State legislature/legislator approval ratings. It is for this reason that a review of the literature illustrating the statistical significance of the economy on voting behavior for incumbents was included. Kramer's (1971) analysis of the short-term fluctuations in voting behavior, and more specifically, effects of unemployment, per capita real income, and incumbency as it related to congressional elections from 1896-1964 was based on a multivariate model wanting to overcome some of the perceived weaknesses and difficulties in the earlier studies of (Downs, 1957; Key, 1966; Kerr, 1944; Pearson and Myers, 1948; and Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960). Kramer found, as did Key (1966), that economic conditions had a significant effect on congressional elections, with the incumbent benefiting from an economic upswing, and his opponent benefitting from an economic downturn. Arcelus and Meltzer (1975) found no appreciable significance in aggregate economic conditions on voter behavior, and suggested that important swings arose from voter participation and not voter shift between parties. Bloom and Price (1975) sought to reconcile this dispute of findings by defining long-run and short-run economic forces; they defined their independent variables as party affiliation and economic conditions, and their dependent variable as voter behavior. They proposed to examine the causal relationship between economic conditions and voting behavior as it related to party affiliation. The hypothesis was that as economic conditions worsened, a voter would be more likely to cast his ballot for the non-incumbent party's candidate. Bloom and Price (1975) conducted multiple time-series and cross sectional analyses and found that economic down-turns reduced the vote for an incumbent, but economic upturns had no corresponding positive effect. Additional findings include the same results for both Democratic and Republican administrations, no measurable difference in voter turnout, and voters primarily considered changes relevant only in the last year; these seem to explain methodology errors in the previous work of Stigler (1973), and Arcelus and Meltzer (1975). These results of the afore mentioned studies of conflicting data helped lead Fiorina to evaluate the "economic retrospective voting theory".

Fiorina's analysis of economic retrospective voting theory attempted to answer the question, "does the incumbent administration prosper in good times and suffer in bad times?" Fiorina (1978) used data collected from the national election surveys (1956-1974) which were conducted by the University of Michigan, Survey Research Center and found support at the presidential election level for this theory. However, when this theory was applied to congressional elections Fiorina found no support, a finding that was later reinforced by the findings of Kinder and Kiewiet (1979). Using the independent variables; do you see your personal financial situation as better, same, or worse? and party affiliation, Fiorina found that in 26 of 30 cases those who perceive their situation as same or better voted for the incumbent. Fiorina's study of egocentric (personal) evaluations rather than socio-tropic (national) evaluations, has led to numerous works over the past 30 years that have provided a wealth of information concerning voter behavior, macroeconomics, and personal finances. Socio-tropic evaluations have been found to have a much more significant impact on voter choice in presidential elections (Abramowitz and Ramseh, 1988; Kiewiet, 1983; Kinder and Kiewiet, 1981; and Kramer, 1983). To further clarify socio-tropic and egocentric voting behaviors, Abramowitz and Ramseh (1988) attempted to answer the questions of how voters evaluate economic information and how they assign causal responsibility for personal changes in financial circumstances. Their results strengthened the previous cases made by Lau and Sears (1981), Feldman (1982), and Brody and Sniderman (1977), that few individuals assigned changes in their personal financial situation to macroeconomic conditions. Abramowitz and Ramseh (1988) found that there was a significantly strong relationship between voter behavior and perceptions of the national economy, especially when the individual's personal financial condition was concurrent with that of the economy. However, when the individual's personal financial condition differed from the national economy they found no strong relationship between voter behavior and incumbency. This is consistent with the findings of Erikson (1989) who formulated a multivariate model using Tufte's (1978) measure of net candidate advantage with Hibb's (1987) measure of income change. Erikson extended the time series to include presidential elections from 1948-1984 and found a .92 correlation of events.

Chubbs (1988) analyzed national and state economic data from 1942-1982 in an effort to explain their effects on voting behavior in Governor and State legislative elections. The findings in his analysis show that the national economy is a better predictor of vote choice in governor and state legislative elections than is a state's economic performance. He concluded that while a state's economic performance is significant in a governor's race, the standard error is much too large to be of value especially in the wake of the large magnitude of the national indicator, and the state legislative evidence is even weaker. Stein (1990) presents 1982 gubernatorial survey data which shows that 25.4% of respondents blame the president for a state's economic condition, 18.4% blame the president and the governor, and only 15.4% blame the governor. The results of Stein's regression analysis support the findings of Chubb in evaluations of gubernatorial elections. State economic conditions are significant but pale in comparison to the effects of national economic conditions. Stein did find with greater significance that voters who had assigned blame for the state's economy to governors did vote retrospectively for incumbent governors supporting the findings of Fiorina (1978). Niemi, Stanley, and Vogel (1995) hypothesize that state economic policies and their implications are significant in gubernatorial voting, especially in regards to tax policies. In a retrospective voting model they analyzed 1986 voting data and found with statistical significance that states which did not raise taxes were 13% more likely to vote for either the incumbent governor or the incumbent governor's party candidate if the incumbent was not seeking re-election. Svoboda (1995) employs voter's perceptions of the state's economy to analyze those effects on 1982 and 1986 gubernatorial elections. His findings are more significant than that of earlier studies which he attributes to his methodology. Svoboda claims it is the perceptions of the voters that matters and not the aggregate economic data of previous studies. Svoboda's results of the analysis of the 1982 and 1986 data show that after party affiliation the voter's perception of the state's economy is the most important predictor of vote choice followed by the voter's perception of the president. Stein (1990), Niemi, Stanley, and Vogel (1995), and Svoboda (1995) each stress that the increased significance of state economic conditions and policies on gubernatorial elections in their research is directly related to the increased role of state governments in recent years and the elimination of older data.

Richard Nadeau and Michael Lewis-Beck (2001) acknowledged that the national economy had a substantial effect on voting behavior, and in their comprehensive study attempted to clarify the significance of that affect as it correlates to different economic indicators, retrospective evaluations, prospective evaluations, the role of institutions, and subjective or objective measures. Nadeau and Lewis-Beck analyzed American National Election Studies from 1956-1996 to correlate the relationship between voting behavior and national economic conditions then they proposed a National Business Index (NBI) based on data from the Survey of Consumer Attitudes and Behavior, University of Michigan; which asked if business conditions were worse, same, or better than one year ago in several categories. Individuals will weigh unemployment, GDP, inflation, and other variables differently so this assessment more accurately defines the voter’s perception of the economy. They found this measure to be more statistically important than any single indicator. Nadeau and Lewis-Beck also proposed an Economic Future Index (EFI) by combining survey results from several different questions. Much like the NBI this data was aggregated into one variable. This data was also gathered from the Survey of Consumer Attitudes and Behavior, University of Michigan. The data analysis produced coefficients roughly equal in size to that of the analysis using the NBI, and appeared equally important in determining voter behavior. After further evaluation, they contended that the NBI and retrospective voting is more significant in election years with an incumbent presidential candidate than election years without an incumbent. The second finding from their analysis is that the EFI and prospective voting was more significant in election years without an incumbent candidate. In 2012 political scientists continue to study and debate the most accurate model for economics and voting behavior; one can hardly disagree with the fact that the condition of the economy has a direct causal effect on voter behavior. It is because of the magnitude of this evidence that an indicator of economic conditions must be used as a control variable.

Approval ratings and professionalism

Jewell (1982) illustrates the difficulties associated with political research at the state level noting that the conversion of theory into practice is extremely complicated, yet there are a growing number of political scientists endeavoring to explain causal relationships between the professionalism of State legislatures and legislator turnover, policy making capacity, and citizen approval ratings. The subject of how to measure the professionalism of a state legislature is one of these problems. Squire (2007) details that the first indices were created by John Grumm (1971) and the Citizens Conference on State Legislators (1971) both to measure legislative policy making *capacity*, and since that time alternative measures for various purposes have been developed Berkman 1993; Berry, Berkman, and Schneiderman 2000; Bowman and Kearney 1988; Carey, Niemi, and Powell 2000; King 2000; Moncrief 1988; and Morehouse 1983. Thompson and Moncrief (1992) acknowledge that while the definition of professionalism may differ slightly, most professionalism studies include compensation, days of service, and staff support as the three main components of their indices. Squire's index is unique in the fact it measures these three components of State legislatures and compares them to the U.S. Congress. A perfect resemblance with the U.S. Congress would score a 1.0, while no resemblance would score a 0.0 (Squire, 2007). King (2000) states "These properties make Squire's procedure superior to others for assessing changes in professionalism in State legislatures."

Squire (1993) analyzed data from the 1989 University of Iowa Social Science Institute's Heartland Poll to correlate, among other things, the relationship between State legislatures' professionalism and citizen's opinions of their legislatures. The data included 1,610 cases from seven states. Responding to voter's sentiment of the early 1990's Squire (1993) hypothesized that approval ratings of State legislatures would be negatively correlated with legislative professionalism. As an example he cited that California voters had cut resources available to legislators for the third time in six years. The legislative reforms which were supposed to create a more professional legislature and an atmosphere of better representation had not succeeded. But was the professionalism of the legislature to blame? To answer this question Squire developed his index of professionalism to measure the institution not the individual legislator, and made a seminal decision to compare the three components to the U.S. Congress. Squire found with statistical significance that professionalism was negatively correlated with approval ratings. Other findings concluded that support for the legislature was independent of age, income, and education. Minorities support the legislature less than non-minorities, and rural residents support the legislature more than urban residents. Squire concluded that his findings could be a result of the most professionalized legislatures being located in the most populated states with the most economic and socially diverse residents.

Building on the work of King (2000), Kelleher and Wolak (2007) analyzed data from 1, 826 respondents in all fifty States gathered by the National Center for the State Courts to correlate the confidence levels of citizens with the courts, governors, and state legislatures. Kelleher and Wolak's analysis showed a statistically significant, negative correlation between citizen's confidence level in their State legislature and the professionalism of the State legislature. The "state legislature" sample of 1,704 respondents included 17% who said they had a great deal of confidence, 57% who had some confidence, 18% with only a little confidence, and 8% with no confidence at all. The p value of professionalism in their multilevel ordinal logit estimates was -.497 with a standard error of .146. This evidence supported the previous findings of Jewell (1982), Squire (1993), and King (2000).

Approval ratings and Congress

Congressional approval ratings emerge from a reward-punishment model (Ramirez, 2009). Scholarly research has shown that economic growth increases public approval of Congress and economic downturns decrease public approval of Congress (Stimson, 2004; and Rudolph, 2002). Another key independent variable in the fluctuation of the approval ratings of Congress is “Presidential Approval”. Patterson and Caldeira (1990) show a statistically significant relationship between the Presidential approval rating and the approval rating of Congress. As the President’s approval rating rises so does the approval rating of Congress. Conversely, as the President’s approval rating drops so does the approval rating of Congress. Recent scholarly research that analyzes the relationship between Congressional approval ratings and partisan conflict has demonstrated mixed results. Fiorina, Abrahms, and Pope (2005) find no significant relationship between Congressional approval ratings and partisan conflict. While Ramirez (2009) finds that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two. The limited amount of research conducted concerning Congressional approval ratings is in large part due to the lack of consistent data making a reliable measure hard to acquire. Ramirez (2009) illustrates this point, citing that Durr, Gilmour, and Wolbrecht (1997) “use over 300 administrations of over 40 different surveys items regarding public evaluations of Congress and extract a single latent dimension.”

Term limits and public approval

In the sections above, I have briefly discussed the extant scholarship that addresses either directly or indirectly public approval of state legislatures. While term limits have been widely studied and typically instituted by voters, very little attention has been given to whether voters are happy with what they wrought. If voters wanted term limits and then put them in place, shouldn't they be happier with the work of their legislatures than they were prior to the imposition of term limits? Or, might voters in term limit states be happier with their legislatures than voters in other states who may want term limits but don't have them? At base, the question is important because it speaks to an essential question of representative democracy. Legislatures are meant to "represent" the state. If term limits improve that relationship (as advocates expected them to do) then that should be evident from public approval.

In the remainder of this paper I will build a model predicting public approval of state legislatures. I am primarily interested in the relationship between term limits and public approval. Other factors will also be incorporated into the discussion but these will be treated as controls in the empirical analyses.

Given my review of the limited scholarship on public approval of state legislatures and the U.S. Congress, I have developed two hypotheses regarding term limits and State legislatures' approval ratings.

1. Term limit states will have higher approval ratings for their legislatures than States without term limits will have for their legislatures.
2. Term limit states will have lower disapproval ratings for their legislatures than States without term limits will have for their legislatures.

The first hypothesis incorporates approval ratings as the dependent variable. This is consistent with the previous scholarly research on professionalism (Squire, 1993; King, 2001; and Kelleher and Wolak, 2007). The dependent variable in hypothesis 2, disapproval rate, was derived from the literature review of economics and voting behavior. Specifically retrospective and prospective voting, retrospective voting research (Bloom and Price, 1975; Fiorina, 1978; Kinder and Kiewiet, 1981; Kramer, 1983; and Nadeau and Lewis-Beck, 2001) has shown that negative economic results punish incumbents. Applying that reasoning, I believed it was possible that even if term limits did not affect approval rating in a positive direction they could lower disapproval ratings.

The dependent variable in my study is the public approval of state legislatures. Unfortunately, as is often the case in state politics research, a measure of this important concept across the states remains elusive. A thorough investigation of existing surveys assessing the approval ratings of State Legislatures met with limited success. Although no comprehensive surveys including all fifty States were discovered; I found that two separate institutions have conducted surveys in eleven States. The combination of these results produced 270 cases spanning nine years.

The 270 cases evaluated have independent variables that represent one state with a lifetime ban (TLife), two states with consecutive bans (TConn), two states in which term limits were repealed by the State Supreme Court (RC), and six states that have never tried to enact term limit legislation (NTL). Appendix 1displays the listing of each State, its term limit status, the number of cases utilized in this study, and the span of time in which the surveys were conducted. As stated in the first hypothesis I expect term limits to have a positive coefficient indicating that states with term limits will be more likely to approve of their legislature than states without term limits. Conversely, as stated in hypothesis 2, I expect term limits to have a negative coefficient indicating that states with term limits will have a lower disapproval rate of their legislatures than states without term limits.

The literature detailed above has shown with statistical significance that economic conditions, professionalism, and party identification influence approval ratings or levels of confidence in elected officials, be it State legislatures, or the U.S. Congress. The literature also revealed that two other variables could be significant in my analysis; whether a legislature was in session, and divided government.

The economic measure used for this analysis needed to reflect not only the difference in economic conditions of each State; it also had to reflect economic changes on a monthly basis. An impartial measure was found in the monthly unemployment numbers for each State. These numbers were obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. I would expect this variable to have a negative coefficient in the regression analysis of approval rate, and a positive coefficient in the regression analysis of disapproval rate. This would indicate that as unemployment rises a state legislatures' approval rating will decrease and its disapproval rating will increase.

There has been a considerable amount of scholarly debate in recent years about how to measure professionalism in a State's legislature. The following summation of the difficulties in measuring legislature professionalism is taken from Squire (2007) and illustrates the problems associated with the three components most often used in the indexes. Most professionalism indices use legislator salary as the sole indicator of the compensation measure, but there are unvouchered reimbursements, health insurance coverage and pension plans which could be considered. The difficulties of obtaining all such measurements make it nearly impossible to include them in the legislator's salary. Rosenthal (1996) disputes the belief that salaries should be included in the index at all because they are not an institutional measure. Squire (2007) details the difficulties measuring the second component, legislative session length, because it is reported in two different ways; calendar days or legislative days. There are also special sessions and perfunctory business which could be considered. The final component in the indices, staff support, is difficult because it is measured in three ways by the NCSL, and difficult to find or not available in years the NCSL did no surveys. The lack of this information has led Berry, Berkman, and Schneiderman (2000), Carey, Niemi, and Powell (2000), and Moncrief (1988) to use annual budget numbers for a State legislatures as a replacement. After a careful analysis of each method; it was decided that the index used for this variable would be coded using Squire's Index of State Legislature Professionalism revised in 2003. This measure is expected to correlate negatively with approval rate and positively with disapproval rate (Squire, 1993; King, 2001; and Kelleher and Wolak 2007), indicating that as a state legislature becomes more professional the voters will approve of it less and disapprove of it more.

At the onset of this research it was believed that party identification could affect a state's approval rating of its legislature. The review of the existing literature pertaining to economics and voting substantiated this belief, especially in the research of gubernatorial elections (Stein, 1990; and Svoboda, 1995). I have no theoretical reason to expect a particular relationship between party and public approval, but it is included as a control variable in order to build a more complete model.

The legislative session length for each State differs greatly. Some of the State legislatures evaluated in the model meet year round; while others meet every other year, or for just a few months. Because it is more likely that state legislative news will be printed in newspapers and broadcast on television and radio programs during these legislative sessions this variable was included. I don't attempt to correlate how many times a story was in the media or measures of good news or bad news; only that the legislature was in session. It is expected that this variable will have a negative correlation to approval rate and a positive correlation to disapproval rate because if a state legislature is not in session usually there will be no press coverage of legislative activities to influence approval ratings.

Divided government was added as the final control variable. The information used to compile this variable was gathered from previous research conducted by Margaret Ferguson, Indiana University, Indianapolis. Divided government is often used as a control variable in gubernatorial and congressional approval rating research. The expectation is that divided government will have a positive coefficient, indicating that if a state has a divided government the approval ratings will be higher, and if it does not the disapproval ratings will be higher.

Empirical analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is the State, and at the heart of the investigation is "Do states with term limits have higher approval ratings of their state legislatures than states without term limits? And conversely do states with term limits have lower disapproval ratings for their state legislature than states without term limits?" STATA was used for the regression analysis and all variables were coded as follows.

Dependent Variables. The dependent variables in my study are the approval rates of state legislatures and the disapproval rates of state legislatures. As was previously stated a measure of this important concept across the states remains elusive. Although no comprehensive surveys including all fifty States were discovered; Survey USA has conducted monthly surveys in California, Oregon, Washington, and Kansas; and Quinnipiac University has conducted monthly surveys in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Connecticut, Florida, and Virginia. In each poll the respondent was asked if he/she approved, disapproved, or was unsure of the way the State legislature was handling its job. The combination of these results produced 270 cases spanning nine years. Each case has a minimum of 600 respondents and a sampling error of less than 4%. This information was coded into three separate variables; ARate for the percentage of respondents in a state who approved, DRate for the percentage of respondents in a state who disapproved, and URate for the percentage of respondents in a state who were unsure.

Independent Variable.

Term limits are the primary independent variable of interest in this study. The term limit data for each State was obtained from the National Conference of State

Legislators and coded 1 for yes a state has term limits in effect, and coded 0 for a state has no term limits in effect. The 270 cases evaluated here represent one state with a lifetime ban, two states with consecutive bans, two states in which term limits were repealed by the State Supreme Court, and six states that have never tried to enact term limit legislation. As stated above, I expect term limits to have a positive coefficient with dependent variable 1 indicating that states with term limits will be more likely to approve of their legislature than states without term limits. Conversely, as stated in hypothesis 2, I expect term limits to have a negative coefficient with dependent variable 2 indicating that states with term limits will have a lower disapproval rate of their legislatures than states without term limits.

Control Variables.

I am primarily interested in the effects of term limits on state legislature approval but the previous research detailed above has shown with statistical significance that multiple variables must be included in the analysis of the approval and disapproval ratings of state legislatures. The linear regression conducted in this research utilizes measures for these variables to structure a more complete model. Every effort was made to obtain each of these measures from one source. I was successful for all variables except in the case of party identification, which required two sources. Control variables outlined above and included in this analysis consist of professionalism, economic conditions, party identification, whether the legislature is in session, and divided government.

Professionalism. There is some disagreement on how best to measure professionalism. After considering the existing research, I decided Squire's Index of State

Legislature Professionalism revised in 2003. This measure, "ProLeg", was used for each State in all years analyzed. I expect this variable to have a negative coefficient for approval rating and a positive coefficient for disapproval rating in the regression analysis. This would indicate that as previous research has demonstrated (Squire, 1993; King, 2001; and Kelleher and Wolak, 2007) the more professional a legislature becomes the lower the level of approval, and the less professional a legislature becomes the higher the approval rating. The disapproval rate should work conversely, the higher the level of professionalism the higher the disapproval rate and the lower the level of professionalism becomes the lower the level of disapproval rate becomes. This is an important distinction between previous research in that Squire (1993) and Kelleher and Wolak (2007) did not attempt to correlate disapproval ratings with professionalism.

Economic Indicator. As was previously stated the economic measure used for this analysis needed to reflect the difference in economic conditions of each state and it also had to reflect economic changes on a monthly basis. An impartial measure was found in the monthly unemployment numbers for each State. These numbers were obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The variable, "UnEmRate", is coded at the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for each case. Based on the previous research outlined above this variable is expected to correlate negatively to approval rate, positively to disapproval rate. Positive economic conditions should work in favor of public approval of legislatures while negative economic conditions should detract from it.

Party Identification. Three measures were developed using annual political leanings of a State's residents as surveyed by the Gallup Institute and the Pew Research

Center. The first variable, “Rep”, coded for this annual measure is percent Republican or leaning Republican, the second variable, “Dem”, is percent Democrat or leaning Democrat, and the third, “SPID” is coded as the percent of respondents who answered Democrat or leaning Democrat minus the percent of respondents who answered Republican or leaning Republican. Each case was coded for this annual variable regardless of the month in which the approval survey was conducted. The direction of correlation for this variable was not predicted prior to the initial correlation, but was included in the analysis to measure any consequential affect it may have in the linear regression model.

In Session. The legislative session length for each State differs greatly. Some of the State legislatures evaluated in the model meet year round; while others meet every other year, or for just a few months. Because it is more likely that State legislative news will be printed in newspapers and broadcast on television and radio programs during these legislative sessions this variable was included. Squire (1993) found no statistical significance for this variable when included in his study but he was working with annual data, and it is not included in the research of Kelleher and Wolak (2007). I don’t attempt to correlate how many times a story was in the media or measures of good news or bad news; only that the legislature was in session. This information was obtained from the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the variable, “InSess”, was coded 1 for the legislature being in session and 0 for the legislature not being in session. It is expected that this variable will have a negative coefficient in the regression analysis of approval rate indicating that if a legislature is in session the approval rate will be lower than for legislatures not in session. The variable is predicted to have a positive coefficient in the regression analysis of disapproval rate indicating that if a state legislature is in session the disapproval rate will be higher than the disapproval rate of a state legislature that is not in session.

Divided Government. The information used to compile these variables was gathered from previous research conducted by Margaret Ferguson, Indiana University, Indianapolis. The first variable, “DivLeg”, was coded 0 if each House of the State legislature was controlled by the same Party, and 1 if each House was controlled by different Parties. The second variable, “DivGov”, was coded 0 if both Houses were controlled by the same party as the Governor, and 1 if there was any divide between the Governor and either House. The third variable, “DivLG”, for divided government is coded 0 if both houses of the State legislature are controlled by the same party as the Governor’s Party, it is coded 1 if both houses of the State legislature are controlled by the same Party but it is different from the Governor’s Party, and coded 2 if each house of the State legislature is controlled by a different party. The expected correlation of these variables in the regression analysis is positive for approval rate and negative for disapproval rate.

Methodology. Following the formulation of the hypotheses, and the gathering of pertinent data, a correlation analysis was generated to inspect the possible relationships between the independent variables and the two dependent variables. The results of these correlations are available for inspection in Appendix 2. Term limits, professionalism, unemployment, and in session correlated as predicted. There appeared to be interaction between the two categories “Rep” and “Dem” and the two categories “DivLeg” and “DivGov”; for this reason the variables “SPID” and “DivLG” were chosen for the regression model. “SPID” and “DivLG” both correlate in a positive direction to “ARate”, and negatively to “DRate”. To adjust standard errors and any unexplained variance in the regression analysis the data was clustered on an independent variable, “Fips”, the Federal Information Processing Standard. This standard was used to assign a unique coding number for each of the eleven states in the analysis. The unit of analysis for this research was “States” and all correlations and multivariate regression models were produced in Stata.

Analysis

Table 1 illustrates the findings from the clustered multivariate regression. Term limits, professionalism, and unemployment are statistically significant at .001 and all traveled in the predicted direction. Divided government and party identification are significant at .01, and again traveled in the predicted direction. The only variable that is not significant is in session. The term limit results are impressive, holding all independent variables at their mean, states with term limits are nearly 10% more likely to approve of their state legislature than states without term limits. The R-squared value rose from .510 in the regression without the term limit variable; to .672 with the term limit variable included. As expected States with term limit legislation are more likely to approve of their State legislatures than are States without term limit legislation.

Table 1. Summary of Linear Regression Results

Approval Ratings of State Legislatures R-Sq. = .672		
	Coefficient	Robust S.E.
Term limits	9.317***	1.538
Professionalism	-32.073***	5.039
Unemployment	-1.961***	0.263
Divided Government	2.853**	0.781
In Session	0.227	1.102
State Party ID	0.227**	0.065
Constant	46.636***	2.330

260 Observations, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 2 illustrates the findings from the second clustered multivariate regression, this one using the disapproval rate dependent variable. In this regression term limits, professionalism, and unemployment were statistically significant at the .001 level. Divided government slipped slightly to a p value less than .01 and in session was statistically significant at the .05 level. The term limit results are even more impressive in this analysis with a coefficient of -13.91. The R-squared value of .697 illustrates that the independent variables in this regression model are an imposing predictor of states' disapproval ratings of their state legislatures. As expected states with term limit legislation are less likely than states without term limits to disapprove of their state legislatures. Holding all independent variables at their mean, states with term limits are nearly 14% less likely to disapprove of their legislature than are states without term limits. While no direction of causality was predicted for in session, its negative coefficient was noteworthy. If a legislature is in session states are 2.7% less likely to disapprove of it.

Table 2. Summary of Linear Regression Results

Disapproval Ratings of State Legislatures R-Sq. = .697		
	Coefficient	Robust S.E.
Term limits	-13.911***	1.830
Professionalism	43.257***	6.227
Unemployment	2.746***	0.407
Divided Government	-4.264**	1.145
In Session	-2.773*	1.422
State Party ID	-.344*	0.117
Constant	32.764***	3.278

260 Observations, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The significance of these findings established a foundation for additional analyses of term limits and approval and disapproval ratings. Many scholars (Lazarus, 2006; Powell, 2000; and Moncrief, Niemi, and Powell, 2004, et al.) have conducted scholarly research analyzing the career paths of legislators in term limited and non-term limited states. They have found that the turnover rate is not as great as previously predicted. If turnover in state legislatures is not as significant as predicted and the research presented here clearly demonstrates that term limits are a statistically significant predictor of approval ratings, could it be certain types of term limits lead to higher approval and lower disapproval ratings? The data obtained from the National Conference of State Legislators contained information that allowed for the recoding of the term limit variable. The first new variable, TConn was used to measure if a state had consecutive term limits, and the second new variable LConn, measured if a State had lifetime term limits, each variable was coded 1 for yes and 0 for no. With these newly created variables, two new hypotheses can be tested. The expectation is that legislators in states with consecutive term limit legislation should be more in tune not only with the desires of their own constituents but with the desires of other constituencies as well. The reasoning for this idea was that career politicians who may have to seek another office after a consecutive ban might find him/her self relying on these other constituencies for an election victory. A politician with a lifetime ban will not be as responsive to his/her constituents as well as other districts constituents because they are not concerned with re-election. Politicians who are concerned with a larger group of constituents, not only their own, should make policy decisions that result in higher approval ratings of state legislatures.

Hypothesis 3:

States with consecutive term limit legislation for their state legislature will have higher approval ratings of their state legislatures than will states with lifetime term limits.

Table 3. Summary of Linear Regression Results

Approval Ratings of State Legislatures R-Sq. = .673		
	Coefficient	Robust S.E.
Consecutive T.L.	9.340***	1.593
Lifetime T.L	6.307	6.020
Professionalism	-27.720*	11.767
Unemployment	-1.903***	0.320
Divided Government	2.690*	.893
In Session	0.007	1.003
State Party ID	0.194	0.113
Constant	45.688***	3.876

260 Observations *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Hypothesis 4:

States with consecutive term limit legislation for their state legislature will have lower disapproval ratings of their state legislatures than states with lifetime term limits.

Table 4. Summary of Linear Regression Results

Disapproval Ratings of State Legislatures R-Sq. = .698		
	Coefficient	Robust S.E.
Consecutive T.L.	-14.000***	1.884
Lifetime T.L	-10.668	7.645
Professionalism	38.567*	13.624
Unemployment	2.684***	0.487
Divided Government	-4.090***	1.182
In Session	-2.538	1.380
State Party ID	-0.308	0.143
Constant	33.785***	5.049

260 Observations *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate these hypotheses to be accurate. In this analysis consecutive term limits are the most statistically significant of all three types of term limits analyzed. In Tables 3 and 4 lifetime term limits do not meet the standard for statistical significance The R-Squared value in Table 4 is the highest of all four regression models indicating that states with consecutive term limits are less likely to disapprove of their state legislature than are states with either no term limits or states with lifetime bans. The coefficients for consecutive term limits in Tables 3 and 4 are larger than the coefficients are for term limits in Tables 1 and 2 respectfully.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data presented in this paper should be good news for advocates of term limit legislation and political scientists. Advocates adhering to term limit progressivism who acknowledged the failures of professional legislatures may have something to cheer about. The initiation of term limits, especially consecutive term limits appears to be associated with higher approval and lower disapproval ratings.

Term-limit populism aspired to replace long serving legislators with more responsive "ordinary citizens". Scholarly research has shown that even with term limit legislation many politicians are simply moving through different political offices (Lazarus, 2006; Powell, 2000; and Moncrief, Niemi, and Powell, 2004). The data presented here clearly shows that term limit legislation is associated with higher approval ratings of state legislatures. Term-limit populists might not have achieved their desired effect of removing long serving legislators; but if approval ratings are an indication, they are achieving their desired goal of more responsive government.

Term-limit republicanism advocated term limits to eliminate careerism thus eliminating the need for re-election and enabling legislators to enact better policies. Term limit republicans consider term limits essential in the transformation of legislators into "trustees" insulated from public demands, elites, and special interests. Term limits have not eliminated careerism or the need for re-election, but may have induced politicians to enact better policies in the hopes of being elected to another political office. A career in politics in a term limited state now requires legislators to enact policies that will not offend constituents in other districts or constituents who place more value on other political roles, which is not necessarily the case in non-term limited states.

Term Limit Libertarians who see term limits as only one step in the downsizing of government appear to be the single group who has not achieved their end goal.

According to Lazarus (2011) “Term limit advocates have been partially, but not completely successful in their stated goal of removing careerist politicians from state legislatures. While term limits certainly do stop a legislator from seeking re-election to a seat after a specified number of terms, I find that those that wish to pursue a long-term political career are not, in general stopped by term limits.” The advocates of term limits who saw them as a “cure all” for government by removing long serving legislators and isolating legislators from public demands might have solved the problem of unresponsive, degenerated State government without the removal of long serving legislators. The unintended result of term limit legislation appears to induce career politicians to be more responsive to their constituents as well as other constituents; thus generating higher approval ratings for the legislature as a whole.

The findings in this study demonstrate that in the eleven states analyzed, states with term limit legislation in place have higher approval ratings and lower disapproval ratings of their legislatures than do states without term limit legislation in place. Furthermore the data demonstrates that consecutive bans are superior to lifetime bans in that these bans are associated with even higher levels of public support. There is a potential weakness of the consecutive vs. lifetime bans results in this study, because California was the only state analyzed with lifetime bans. Still the robust results of this study should be encouragement for additional scholars to supplement the hypotheses developed for this project by furthering the study of state legislature approval ratings and term limit legislation.

Appendix 1.

States' Term Limit Status and Cases Analyzed

State	Term Limit Status	No. of Cases	Span of Cases
California	lb	17	3/2010-7/2011
Connecticut	ntl	18	7/2003-4/2012
Florida	cb	38	6/2004-1/2012
Kansas	ntl	17	3/2010-7/2011
New Jersey	ntl	57	4/2003-11/2011
New York	ntl	40	6/2004-2/2012
Ohio	cb	21	12/2006-2/2012
Oregon	rc	17	3/2010-7/2011
Pennsylvania	ntl	21	12/2006-3/2012
Virginia	ntl	6	6/2011-3/2012
Washington	rc	17	3/2010-7/2011

Appendix 2.

```
. correlate ARate Term Profes UnEmRat InSess DivGov DivLeg DivLegG Dem Rep StPtyId
(obs=260)
```

	ARate	Term	Profes	UnEmRat	InSess	DivGov	DivLeg	DivLegG	Dem	Rep
ARate	1.0000									
Term	0.1568	1.0000								
Profes	-0.3684	0.2184	1.0000							
UnEmRat	-0.6478	0.1592	0.2081	1.0000						
InSess	0.0781	-0.3208	0.1947	-0.2456	1.0000					
DivGov	0.0008	-0.1611	0.2518	0.0550	0.1879	1.0000				
DivLeg	0.1520	-0.1773	0.2681	-0.1122	0.3315	0.6855	1.0000			
DivLegG	0.0892	-0.1878	0.2696	-0.0282	0.2805	0.9156	0.9114	1.0000		
Dem	0.3178	-0.1415	0.2403	-0.4552	0.4033	-0.0763	0.1935	0.0591	1.0000	
Rep	0.1240	0.3369	-0.2687	-0.0975	-0.3714	0.0197	-0.1179	-0.0558	-0.7110	1.0000
StPtyId	0.1118	-0.2554	0.2747	-0.2022	0.4193	-0.0528	0.1695	0.0622	0.9295	-0.9202

	StPtyId
StPtyId	1.0000

Appendix 2 Continued.

```
. correlate DRate Term Profes UnEmRat InSess DivGov DivLeg DivLegG Dem Rep StPtyId
(obs=260)
```

	DRate	Term	Profes	UnEmRat	InSess	DivGov	DivLeg	DivLegG	Dem	Rep
DRate	1.0000									
Term	-0.1528	1.0000								
Profes	0.3137	0.2184	1.0000							
UnEmRat	0.6641	0.1592	0.2081	1.0000						
InSess	-0.1784	-0.3208	0.1947	-0.2456	1.0000					
DivGov	-0.0327	-0.1611	0.2518	0.0550	0.1879	1.0000				
DivLeg	-0.2080	-0.1773	0.2681	-0.1122	0.3315	0.6855	1.0000			
DivLegG	-0.1340	-0.1878	0.2696	-0.0282	0.2805	0.9156	0.9114	1.0000		
Dem	-0.3811	-0.1415	0.2403	-0.4552	0.4033	-0.0763	0.1935	0.0591	1.0000	
Rep	-0.0843	0.3369	-0.2687	-0.0975	-0.3714	0.0197	-0.1179	-0.0558	-0.7110	1.0000
StPtyId	-0.1678	-0.2554	0.2747	-0.2022	0.4193	-0.0528	0.1695	0.0622	0.9295	-0.9202

	StPtyId
StPtyId	1.0000

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CURRICULUM VITAE

John W. Downs III

EDUCATION

M.A. Political Science *Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN*	Fall 2012
B.S. General Studies *Indiana University, Kokomo, IN*	December 31, 2010
A.S. Applied Business Studies *Indiana University, Kokomo, IN*	December 31, 1991

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Y103	Introduction to American Politics	Spring 2012, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN
Y101	Introduction to Political Science	Fall 2012, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN
Y103	Introduction to American Politics	Fall 2012, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN
Y317	The Media and Politics	Fall 2012, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Term limits and State legislatures	Thesis, October 2011-Present
Utopian Society and labor relations	Jasper Sumner, October 2011-Present
Executive orders and Governors	Margaret Ferguson, October 2011-April 2012

INTERNSHIP

Conducted research on legislation related to Right to Work and Education.	Ed Delaney, State Representative Indianapolis, IN

SYMPOSIUM

As part of a 3 person group, we designed, coordinated, advertised, and produced a public discussion on the environment, and State and Federal legislation.	April 2011, Speakers; Kerwin Olson, Director Citizens Action Coalition; Keith Baugues, Asst. Comm., Air Quality, IDEM; Brandon Seitz, Director of the Office of Energy Development.
Bulen Symposium	February 2011, Attended

WORKS CITED

My “Right to Work” legislation research data was used in a speech to the Indiana General Assembly by State Representative Ed Delaney.

PUBLISHING GOALS

I am currently working on two projects which I hope to have published in the near future. The first is a qualitative narrative of the effects of Right to Work legislation on States' Economies. It has been suggested that this could be submitted to the Midwest Political Science Association.

The second is a quantitative analysis of term limits, the economy, and professionalism on States' approval ratings of their legislatures.

SERVICES

Political Science Department Review	November 2011
Potential department faculty presentations	February 2012

EMPLOYMENT

Architectural Surface Design, Production Supervisor — February 2008-December 2009

- Worked with owner to help enhance or expand the company's various production capabilities.
- Developed and implemented new production models and schedules.
- Managed all aspects of production; purchasing, scheduling, fabrication, installation, and training.

Instrumentation Consulting & Engineering, Owner — December 2004-February 2008

- Worked with larger engineering companies designing instrumentation specifications for municipal water, wastewater, and security systems.
- Construct and/or evaluate drawings, submittals, as-builts, proposals, and budgets.

Integrated Process Systems, Senior Project Manager — June 1995-December 2004

- Handled complete design and construction coordination of company's awarded contracts.
- Managed all aspects of projects; purchasing, engineering, programming, fabrication, installation, and training.
- Estimated costs of municipal and private projects.
- Developed and implemented several corporate programs including ISO-9000, U.L.508, and employee bonus program.

Indiana American Water Company, Production Technician — May 1988-June 1995

- Control of Chemical dosing, system pumping, and filter operations.
- Controlled and maintained Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System.